

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Plans for the Collectivization of
Czech Agriculture

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1. Dr. Kotatko, head of a department at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Agriculture, outlined the plans of his ministry at a recent meeting of high Czech government officials. He pointed out the fact that the highly individualistic nature of the Czech rural economy made the task of nationalization extremely difficult. There are approximately 1,400,000 separate farms and agricultural holdings in the country; approximately 90 percent of the farmers own less than 15 hectares of land and work their fields without outside help.
2. Kotatko pointed out that for the time being the raising of production levels should take priority over the forcing of radical changes in the rural economic structure. The large landowners will for the moment be spared as long as they meet the purposely exorbitant production quotas and follow the directives of the local Communist authorities. A special discriminatory price structure has also been devised to create difficulties for the prosperous farmers. These landowners are given no textile or food ration coupons and must make all their purchases in the expensive official grey market. Small farmers who do not meet their quotas will also be denied ration cards.
3. The new basic rural unit in the collectivised Czech economy will be the agricultural union or syndicate. Every rural village will contain a union and all its inhabitants and all the farmers in the adjoining territory will be members of the union. Dues will be paid according to the amount of property held. The union will provide seed, breeding stock, and machinery; it will set production quotas, and eventually it will direct the redistribution of the land and the breaking up of the larger holdings. There will be approximately 15,000 syndicates throughout the country: this structure, imposing though it may appear, will be much easier to control than the present 1,500,000 separate rural units.
4. Kotatko also spoke of the setting up of tractor stations with 56 to 100 tractors in each park. Trucks and other agricultural machinery will also be included in these stations. The stations will not only control the distribution of farming equipment, but will take care of political education, since they will be manned by Communist activists.

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